TO EXPLORE THE STRANGEST ISLE

Easter Island Is a Land of Many Mysteries.

HAD ANCIENT CIVILIZATION.

British Museum Undertakes Venture of Learning Secrets Behind Sculptures, Idols and Inscriptions—Little Dot on the Sea Holds Great Treasures In Relics of Volcanic Origin.

Two recent events have revived interest in and promise the final solution of a mystery that has puzzled the world for 200 years, or at least since the Dutch navigator Jacob Roggeveen discovered the triangle of land known as Easter island on Easter morning, 1722, 27 degrees and 30 minutes south of the equator, 2,000 miles from South America and 1,400 miles from the nearest land, Pitcairn island.

The two facts that may prove the keys that will unlock the secrets of Easter island are the sailing of an expedition in an auxiliary schooner yacht fitted out by the British museum as an expedition of research and investigation in charge of W. Scoresby Routledge and some late conclusions by Professor W. E. Safford of the United States department of agriculture, botanist and ethnologist, who has traveled among the isles of the Pacific and also in South America to trace points of similarity, if they exist, between the as yet unsolved sculpture and untranslated language of this forty-two square miles of land and the monuments and peoples of Peru and Bolivia.

On this bit of territory have been counted 550 sculptured statues created upon cyclopean masonry, according to the latest bulletin of the Pan-American union; also there are stone houses, some more than 100 feet in length, with walls six feet thick, built like forts. There are tablets in a strange language, terraces on headlands, with wall toward the sea, sometimes thirty feet high and more than 200 or 300 feet long. On the land side of the terraces are large stone pedestals for the images.

Sculptured From Lava.

Most of the effigies and inscriptions are cut from rough solid lava. Forty are inside the crater of one volcano, and outside are as many more at the foot of the slope, where they were placed for removal to different platforms. Some platforms measure only three or four feet in length, while others are eighty feet in extent. The largest is in an unfinished state. If erected upon its pedestal it would stand seventy feet in height. The smallest figure is but three feet high. All are of the same grim, frozen faced type with the head long, eyes closed under heavy brows, nose large, low bridged and very broad at the nostrils, the upper lips short and the lips pouting. In most instances the head tilts backward. The lower part of the face is broad and heavy, but imperfectly formed. Ears are long and pendant. The shape generally ends at the shoulders or waist. The expression is profoundly solemn, disdainful, rudely picturing supercilious scorn.

Images Thrown Down.

One of the most remarkable features of the mystery is the fact that only one of these images stands in its original position upon a platform. All the others were thrown down.

The work of these ancients stopped suddenly. But why? For two centuries this question has remained unanswered. Was it the eruption of a volcano that did it? Some of the largest of the images are buried to the neck in ashes and fragments of lava.

The recorded writings of the race of stone artists is cut into wooden tablets. Their alphabet, words and sentences, significant thoughts, are expressed by pictures of men, animals and various geometrical designs.

Many Ways of Reading.

To read a page in this supposedly fascinating recorded thought, provided you had the lexicon, you must read from left to right. Then you must turn the wooden page upside down and continue to peruse from left to right. Then again must the student invert his tablet, reading as before, until the screed is finished.

Professor Safford, a man of great learning, has made the interesting discovery that the language of the less than 200 inhabitants today is essentially Polynesian and like that of Hawaii. Nearly all the words in the language spoken by the natives could, by observing certain fixed laws or changes, be converted into Hawaiian. Some of the gods have the same names as the ancient Hawaiian gods, although the islands are separated by 2,000 miles of water. Contrary to the theory of others, Professor Safford believes that the handful of present day inhabitants are the descendants of the ancient lava carvers.

Easter island, with its buried yet visible mysteries, now belongs to Chile, which has discovered ceremonial scepters, clubs, idols of stone and hardwood with eyes of glassy volcanic rock and shell, ceremonial paddles, feature headdresses and small clubs for beating the bark of paper mulberry trees for tapa cloth.

Tombstone Spuds.

As a means of fighting the high cost of living, citizens at Unionville, O., propose raising potatoes in a cemetery.

Knew Only One Kind of Weight.

The young father was rejoicing visibly over the advent of his first son. Early in the morning he was proudly in evidence at the front gate when the iceman appeared.

"Twenty-five pounds?" inquired the iceman.

"No," said the excited parent; "eight and three-quarters."—Ladies' Home Journal.

Old London Parks.

London's parks in the old days were great places for sport, although even then the spectacle of a naked runner was—well, unusual. Coach and foot races were comparatively common, and in 1654 Cromwell himself was present in Hyde park at "a hurling of a great ball by fifty Cornish gentlemen of one side and fifty on the other," the silver ball played with being the prize for the victors. And Cromwell himself tried his hand at coaching in the park with disastrous results, for the horses ran away and my lord protector was pitched into the roadway, narrowly escaping serious hurt from his pistol, which went off in his pocket.—London Chronicle.

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